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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 000654

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TAGS: [KISL](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [IS](#) [TU](#)  
SUBJECT: TURKEY; HIGH HOPES FOR PALESTINIAN NUG; MUBARAK  
VISIT; WASHINGTON CONSULTATIONS

REF: A. STATE 34681

[1](#)B. ANKARA 646

Classified By: Political Counselor Janice Weiner for reasons 1.4(b) and  
(d)

[1](#)1. (U) Action Request in Para 7.

[1](#)2. (C) SUMMARY: Turkish officials are hopeful the establishment of the new Palestinian National Unity Government (NUG) represents a chance for a fresh start in establishing peace and security in the Palestinian territories as well as for dialogue between the Palestinians and Israelis. The GOT is pleased the U.S. is engaging case-by-case with individual NUG ministers and hopes Israel will eventually follow that lead. Turkey has no plans at present to engage with the NUG or Hamas officials at senior levels. If that does occur, it will probably not happen until after Turkey's presidential election, scheduled for May, is completed. Meanwhile, Egyptian President Mubarak is visiting Ankara March 22-23 for talks on a wide array of bilateral and regional issues and new Turkish MFA Deputy Under Secretary for the Middle East will be in Washington next week and hopes to be able to consult with A/S Welch and others. END SUMMARY

PALESTINIAN NUG: A NEW OPPORTUNITY?

[1](#)3. (C) We met March 21 with MFA Deputy Director General for Middle East Affairs Omer Onhon to convey the USG position regarding the Palestinian National Unity Government, discuss the GOT's views, and urge Turkey not to meet with Hamas officials. We underscored that the USG continues to insist that any Palestinian government must renounce violence, recognize Israel, and respect previous agreements and obligations between the parties. Onhon agreed that those principles are broadly supported by the international community and that the new NUG will need to adhere to them. However, the GOT believes the NUG represents a new beginning for the Palestinians, one that should not be summarily dismissed because of the presence of Hamas ministers.

[1](#)4. (C) GOT officials have expressed support for a "nuanced approach" on restarting the MEPP, perhaps to begin with the release of kidnapped Israel Corporal Shalit and a curb on violence, to be followed by Israeli engagement with NUG officials. Onhon commented favorably on case-by-case USG engagement with non-Hamas ministers in the NUG and expressed the hope the Israelis can eventually do the same. He also asserted that, though Hamas has not yet committed to Quartet principles, they were now using "a different tone, one that is at least a bit more promising." Onhon indicated there are no current plans for any visits by either GOT officials to Israel/Palestine or vice versa, nor plans to engage with Hamas directly. Turkish MFA issued a public statement March

17 following the announcement of the formation of the NUG.  
Translated text follows in para eight.

#### MUBARAK VISIT

15. (SBU) Onhon indicated MFA was making final preparations for the March 22-23 visit of Egyptian President Mubarak. According to Onhon, Mubarak had been pressing for a visit to Ankara for some time. The GOT expects a large delegation, with Mubarak accompanied by the Egyptian Foreign Minister, Petroleum Minister, and Ministers for Trade and Investment. He expects Turkey will continue to convey to Egypt its concerns over off-shore oil drilling tenders advertised by the Republic of Cyprus and the agreement on delineating their respective exclusive economic zones signed by Cyprus and Egypt. The Turks did not, however, necessarily expect the visit to bring about an immediate resolution to the problem. In his meetings with President Sezer, PM Erdogan, and FM Gul, Onhon expects Mubarak will discuss a broad array of bilateral and regional issues, including Iraq, Lebanon, and Israel/Palestine.

#### WASHINGTON CONSULTATIONS

16. (SBU) Onhon noted that he and the new MFA Deputy Under Secretary for Middle East/South Asia Feridun Sinirlioglu plan

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to travel to Washington March 24-29. The primary purpose of the trip is to attend the fifth meeting of the Ankara Forum, a group organized by the Turkish Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges to foster economic cooperation between Israel and Palestinians (see ref b). The principal focus of the group has been to re-open with Turkish sponsorship the Erez Industrial Zone in northern Gaza.

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17. (SBU) ACTION REQUEST: We believe the trip would be an excellent opportunity for Turkey's new NEA A/S equivalent to consult on Middle East issues with USG counterparts. Onhon inquired whether A/S Welch and others in State and at NSC might be available for meetings during the week of March 26. Sinirlioglu, who just began his new assignment, returned in January from Tel Aviv, where he served as Turkey's Ambassador to Israel. Onhon just recently returned from New York, having served at Turkey's mission there.

#### GOT TEXT ON PALESTINIAN NUG

18. (U) Begin Text:

The National Unity Government that was formed in Palestine is seen as a new hope from the aspect of efforts for peace and of the expectations of the Palestinian people.

A difficult task awaits the new government regarding the elimination of the difficulties faced by the Palestinian people, the establishment of internal peace in Palestine, and once again making governing institutions there functional.

For the National Unity Government to fulfill this duty appropriately and for it to respond to the expectations of the people, it is necessary for the international community to provide its full support. If this occurs, the new government will be able to help in reestablishing a dialogue between Palestine and Israel.

A very valuable window of opportunity has been opened through the formation of the National Unity Government, especially with regard to the establishment of public order in Palestine and the activation of the peace process that has been blocked for years. In order to make use of this opportunity, all

parties should act with common sense and with a conscience of responsibility.

Within this framework, we expect the international community to adopt an attitude of non-prejudice and encouragement towards the new Palestinian government.

End Text

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